

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SCCT-01 SP-02 PRS-01 SAM-01 INR-07

L-02 NSC-05 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 SCA-01 SSO-00 CCO-00

USSS-00 INRE-00 SY-04 A-01 OPR-01 DODE-00 SCS-03

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O 272007Z FEB 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:AR, PFOR, PINS

SUBJECT: PRESS GUIDANCE FOR EGAN CASE

1. THERE WERE NO QUESTIONS ASKED RE EGAN CASE AT NOON PRESS BRIEFING FEBRUARY 27.
2. THERE FOLLOWS PRESS GUIDANCE PREPARED MORNING FEBRUARY 27 FOR USE BY DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN:

Q. WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE KIDNAPPING OF US CONSULAR AGENT JOHN PATRICK EGAN IN CORDOBA YESTERDAY (FEB. 26)?

SR.(SUGGESTED REPLY) WE UNDERSTAND THAT EGAN WAS ABDUCTED FROM HIS RESIDENCE IN CORDOBA AT APPROXIMATELY 7:00 PM BY THREE ARMED INDIVIDUALS. OTHERS MAY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN SUPPORT ROLES. THE KIDNAPPERS PAINTED -MONTONEROS" ON THE WALL OF THE HOUSE BEFORE MAKING THEIR ESCAPE, ALTHOUGH TO OUR KNOWLEDGE THE ABDUCTION

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HAS NOT YET CONVINCINGLY BEEN CLAIMED BY ANY GROUP.

"MONTONEROS" ARE ONE OF THE TERRORIST GROUPS OPERATING IN ARGENTINA.

Q. HAVE THE KIDNAPPERS MADE ANY DEMANDS?

SR. WE HAVE SEEN PRESS REPORTS THAT THE TERRORISTS ARE MAKING DEMANDS BUT WE HAVE HAD NO CONTACT WITH THE KIDNAPPERS.

Q. CAN YOU GIVE ME SOME BACKGROUND ON MR. EGAN? IS HE A RETIRED US DIPLOMAT?

SR. MR. EGAN IS 62. HE IS A RETIRED AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN WHO HAS SPENT THE LAST 20 YEARS IN SOUTH AMERICA, MOSTLY IN ARGENTINA. HE WAS NAMED CONSULAR AGENT IN CORDOBA IN MARCH, 1973. ALTHOUGH HE IS A NATIVE OF MONTANA, WE UNDERSTAND HE REGARDS CORDOBA AS HIS HOME AND IS HIGHLY REGARDED THERE.

Q. WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT THIS? HAVE WE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE GOA?

SR. YES. AMBASSADOR HILL HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER VIGNES. AMBASSADOR HILL SENT A TEAM OF EMBASSY OFFICERS TO CORDOBA LAST NIGHT TO ASSIST MRS. EGAN AND TO COOPERATE WITH ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES THERE.

Q. WHAT ABOUT EGAN'S REPORTED HEART CONDITION?

SR. THE EMBASSY TEAM IN CORDOBA IS LOOKING INTO THIS AND OTHER PERTINENT FACTORS.

Q. I UNDERSTAND THAT WE CLOSED OUR OFFICES IN PROVINCIAL ARGENTINE CITIES AFTER THE KIDNAPPING OF ALFRED LAUN IN CORDOBA LAST APRIL. WHAT WAS EGAN DOING STILL IN CORDOBA?

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SR. WE WITHDREW AMERICAN EMPLOYEES FROM BINATIONAL CENTER OPERATIONS IN SEVERAL ARGENTINE PROVINCIAL CITIES, INCLUDING CORDOBA. MR. EGAN IS A PRIVATE CITIZEN LIVING IN CORDOBA WHO CHOSE TO REMAIN THERE, AND TO CONTINUE AS US CONSULAR AGENT.

Q. IS THERE ANY DANGER TO OTHER US OFFICIALS IN ARGENTINA?

SR. SEVERAL TERRORIST GROUPS IN ARGENTINA HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO CARRY OUT KIDNAPPINGS AND ASSASSINATIONS. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE ARE DOING OUR BEST TO PROTECT THOSE US OFFICIALS IN ARGENTINA.

Q. ARE YOU INSTITUTING SPECIAL OR ADDITIONAL MEASURES TO DEFEND US OFFICIALS?

SR. WE DO NOT DISCUSS PROTECTIVE MEASURES. KISSINGER

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